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SUBJECT: **PROPOSITION 62 FUNDING**

The vision of Proposition 62 funding is to increase literacy within families by innovative library service and outreach. Proposition 62 funds for enhanced service have been in place for almost 12 months. These funds have been targeted for parents, young children, elementary school age children and young adults. Although there have been problems filling librarian positions, other aspects of the program were implemented very quickly and the community libraries are already seeing results. During the past few weeks, I asked the Library's field staff to provide their impressions of the impact of the improved funding. The following is a summary of those comments.

New Open Hours

All libraries reported that the communities are excited by the additional hours. Many customers commented on improved availability of appointments for computer time and increased homework center hours. For example, El Camino Library staff reported that on the first day of new hours, children were already outside the door thinking they would need to wait another hour for the library to open. When the page opened the door and said that the library would now be open earlier - the kids cheered. The children in Florence said that with the Library open on Monday, they don't have to wait until Tuesday to start their homework.

Materials

All libraries immediately received additional books, etc., aimed specifically for their target age group. The materials are being used and staff have received many comments from parents and children regarding the increased number of materials available for school assignments and preschoolers. Our Bookmobiles in Las Virgenes, Santa Clarita, the Antelope Valley and the Urban Bookmobile have been able to add many new books and add additional children's programming to their stops.

Homework Centers

Libraries report that with extra staff and hours, children are receiving more individualized attention with homework assignments. At Sunkist Library, 6th and 8th grade teachers have reported a noticeable improvement in performance of those students who use the Homework Center. A student at Rowland Heights Library wrote a letter saying "I got an A+ on my report card... you should put them (Homework Centers) in every library... because it will help your kids." A parent with limited English skills at the Littlerock Library told staff how grateful she was because with limited English she could not help her middle school son with homework. Another parent at Littlerock told the Library Manager that her son's behavior problems at school improved significantly once he started going to the homework center everyday after school.

Emergent Literacy

Proposition 62 funding has allowed more libraries to institute "Family Place". This program's goal is to help parents help their very young children (infant-4 years of age) to gain reading readiness skills. Each library has created a special place for young children with child friendly furniture and educational toys, an enhanced book collection including parenting materials, and special programs geared for parents and children. The Library Manager at the East Rancho Dominguez Library overheard one little four year old girl tell her parents that she wanted to take them on a tour of "her special library".

Young Adults

Due to budget constraints, middle school and high school students were often given low priority for library services. Now at Proposition 62 libraries services to this age group can become an important focus. Libraries have increased their outreach to this age group with improved materials and programs specifically designed with young adults in mind. Some libraries have used funds to create a young adult space with new furniture and displays.

Outreach

Proposition 62 funds have significantly increased the outreach librarians can do in their community. Outreach, especially in immigrant communities, is essential because many children and parents do not know about public libraries. Librarians are visiting preschools, WIC, local community events and many classrooms. As a result, one library reported that in a few months there has been a 37% increase in classes coming to the library.

At Live Oak, the librarian has begun a bilingual Chinese storytime at the local preschools. The Library is bringing materials and reading readiness to other locations knowing that soon parents will feel comfortable bringing their children to the library. .

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